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New-York Historical Society.

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1864.

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OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

ELECTED JANUARY, 1864.

President,
FREDERIC DE PEYSTER.

First Vice-President,
THOMAS DE WITT, D.D.

Second Vice-President,
BENJAMIN ROBERT WINTHROP.

Foreign Corresponding Secretary,
GEORGE BANCROFT, LL.D.

Domestic Corresponding Secretary,
SAMUEL OSGOOD, D.D.

Recording Secretary,
ANDREW WARNER.

Treasurer,
BENJAMIN H. FIELD.

Librarian,
GEORGE HENRY MOORE.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

FIRST CLASS—FOR ONE YEAR.

AUGUSTUS SCHELL, ERASTUS C. BENEDICT,
BENJAMIN W. BONNEY.

SECOND CLASS—FOR TWO YEARS.

JOHN ROMEYN BRODHEAD, WILLIAM CHAUNCEY,
CHARLES P. KIRKLAND.

THIRD CLASS—FOR THREE YEARS.

GEORGE FOLSOM, GEORGE GIBBS,
ROBERT L. STUART.

AUGUSTUS SCHELL, *Chairman.*
GEORGE H. MOORE, *Secretary.*

[The officers of the Society are members, *ex officio*, of the Executive Committee.]

COMMITTEE ON THE FINE ARTS.

ABRAHAM M. COZZENS, WILLIAM J. HOPPIN,
JONATHAN STURGES, HAMILTON FISH,
ANDREW WARNER, WILLIAM H. ASPINWALL.

ABRAHAM M. COZZENS, *Chairman.*
ANDREW WARNER, *Secretary.*

[The President, Librarian, and Chairman of the Executive Committee are members, *ex officio*, of the Committee on the Fine Arts.]

New-York Historical Society.

ABSTRACT OF REPORTS FOR THE YEAR 1863.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

No previous year of the Society's history bears a more honorable or gratifying record of progress and prosperity. It is reaping the fruits of a steadfast adherence to a policy and system of management long since determined on in this institution, and rigidly carried out. A fundamental principle of this policy is, to incur no debts. The Society at this time has no debt, and no outstanding bills whatever, and closed the year with a balance of $1,762 (seventeen hundred and sixty-two dollars) in the Treasury. A portion of this balance belongs, by previous appropriation, to the Library account, but there is no debt or outstanding obligation to reduce it.

SPECIAL FUNDS.

The Society has received since its incorporation three legacies in money, viz.:—

I. The Thomas Fund.

In 1832, a legacy of three hundred dollars was received from Isaiah Thomas, the venerable Massachusetts printer and editor, the founder of the American Antiquarian Society. It was probably absorbed in the various expenses of the Society about the time it was received, but has been re-established by the separate investment of the amount, by appropriating that sum derived from fees of commutation for life memberships. It is now invested in the bonds of the United States known as Five-Twenties, and the interest is regularly appropriated for the Library.

II. The Demilt Fund.

In 1849, a legacy of five thousand dollars was received from Miss Elizabeth Demilt, of New York City, through Mr. George T. Trimble. This legacy was specifically appropriated to the Building Fund, and formed a part of the amount expended in the erection of the fire-proof edifice which was completed and occupied by the Society in 1857. The interest on the amount is regularly appropriated for the Library, from the proceeds of the rents of the Hall.

III. The Grosvenor Fund.

In 1858, a legacy of ten thousand dollars was received from the late Seth Grosvenor, Esq. Of this fund, seven thousand dollars are now invested in United States Five-Twenty Bonds. Four thousand dollars were applied in the completion and furnishing of the Library Building. The interest, however, of the entire amount is regularly appropriated for the Library, and the proceeds of the commutation fees for life memberships will continue to be invested from time to time until the entire original amount shall be restored. One thousand dollars has already been so invested.

This is done in accordance with the determination of the Society that all legacies, not specifically appropriated by the testator or destined by him or her to specific objects, shall be securely invested, and the interest alone applied from time to time, in furtherance of the main objects of the Society. The justice and expediency of this policy are apparent; for while it secures in every instance a perpetual memorial of the benefactor (and even small legacies by the certain law of accumulation will produce grand results), it presents also, in every year's report of these results, a pledge of the Society's fidelity to their trust, thus encouraging the liberality of the generous giver.

PUBLICATION FUND.

In order to insure the regular publication of their transactions and collections in American History, the Society in 1858 determined to establish a fund of twenty-five thousand dollars, represented by one thousand scrip shares of twenty-five dollars each. These shares are transferable on the books of the fund, in the hands of the Treasurer, and entitle the holders, their heirs, administrators, or assigns, to receive:

I. Interest—Until the fund is complete, or is sufficient, in the opinion of the Trustees, to enable the publications to commence without impairing the principal thereof—interest on the par value of their shares at the rate of five per cent. per annum.

II. Publications—One copy of each and every publication made at the expense of the fund, amounting to not less than one octavo volume of five hundred pages per annum.

The number of copies of these publications is to be strictly limited to TWELVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY—of which the Society may receive for their corresponding Societies and exchanges, for the increase of the Library, TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY copies—but no copies are to be offered for sale or disposition in any other manner by the Society.

The conditions of this subscription include a pledge on the part of the Society that the moneys received shall be applied for these purposes, and no other, and shall be invested solely in stocks of the United States, the City and State of New York, or on bond and mortgage, and be held forever by the President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer of the Society, as Trustees (ex-officio) of the Publication Fund.

As this fund is not yet sufficiently near completion to warrant the commencement of the new series of publications, the Trustees of the fund have directed a cash dividend of interest to 1864 to be paid to the holders of scrip shares—for which ample means are at their disposal.

The completion of this fund is a most desirable object. When attained, it will give the Society high vantage ground in its relations to its future field of operations. In importance it is second only to the Fireproof Building of the Society, which ensures the security and preservation of the materials of history which we have been able to accumulate; and it is earnestly to be hoped that the liberality which has never been found wanting to us may not hereafter be vainly invoked to accomplish so desirable an end. A renewed effort is to be made to complete this fund immediately—which ought to be seconded by the active co-operation of every member of the Society.

Publications.

The regular publications of the Society hitherto amount to sixteen volumes in octavo, viz.:—

Collections—First Series (embracing Smith's History of New York), 5 vols.; Second Series, Vols. I., II., III. (Part I.), IV. (Catalogue of Printed Books, &c.), 4 vols.

Proceedings.—1843–1849 inclusive, 7 vols.

The second part of the third volume of the Second Series, which is now in press, will contain a copious index to all these volumes, and with Vol. V. (Catalogue of MSS., Maps, and Charts, &c.) will conclude all the former series of publications. The Society has also from time to time published various pamphlets not contained in the above series.

The Historical Museum and Gallery of Art in the Central Park.

The project for the establishment of the Museum of the Society, embracing all their collections of Antiquities and Art, in a portion of the Central Park, has, during the past year, received the sanction of the Society. At a special meeting in May, the previous action of the Executive Committee on this subject was approved—the Society accepted the Act of the Legislature, and again referred the whole subject to the Executive Committee, with power to take such action in the premises as they should deem expedient—not, however, involving the Society in any pecuniary responsibility.

Under this authority, a special Committee has been organized to make the necessary and proper arrangement with the Commissioners of the Central Park in conformity with the provisions of the Act of the Legislature, so as to give the Society the full benefit of all those provisions, and afford it the best protection and security for its rights under the Act. The same Committee are also to procure a suitable plan of the contemplated improvements, with a general estimate of its cost. Upon the adoption of the plan by the Executive Committee, arrangements are to be made for the due execution of the various parts, but all in such wise that when the contemplated improvements shall be completed, no debt or charge whatever on account of it shall remain upon the general funds of the Society.

To secure these objects, another Special Committee has also been organized for the purpose of obtaining, by subscription or voluntary contribution, the funds necessary for the completion of the entire improvement contemplated, of the Arsenal Building and Grounds in the Central Park.

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT.

The Report of the Librarian continues the acknowledgment of public and private liberality. The total number of books and pamphlets added to the Library during the year 1863 was 1432. Fourteen maps, eighteen

volumes bound newspapers, and a large collection of unbound files, which will go far towards perfecting sets, and greatly extend the collection of the Society. Among the additions by purchase was one of the entire collection of MSS., correspondence, letter books, accounts, &c., of the American Fur Company. The mass of papers thus rescued from the paper mill, to which the high price of material had consigned them to be ground up, will hereafter prove of great value in the illustration of the history of what was but a few years ago our Western frontier —now the central continental theatre of busy life in powerful and flourishing States.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 1863.

In accordance with the By-Laws, the Treasurer herewith submits a detailed account of his receipts and payments for account of the New-York Historical Society during the year 1863:

Balance on hand, Jan. 1st, 1863, . . .	$ 541 66
Receipts for 1863, ...	13,775 73
	$14,317 39
Payments for 1863, ...	12,355 39
Balance on hand in Manhattan Company at the credit of the N. Y. Historical Society, .	$1,762 00

(Signed) BENJAMIN H. FIELD, *Treasurer.*

New York, December 31st, 1863.

We, the Committee appointed by the said New-York Historical Society to audit the accounts of its Treasurer, for 1863, do certify that we have compared the same with the vouchers, and find the balance of seventeen hundred and sixty-two dollars ($1,762) deposited in the Manhattan Company, to be correct.

(Signed) T. TILESTON.
R. B. MINTURN, Jr.
O. D. F. GRANT.

New York, Jan. 21st, 1864.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FINE ARTS.

The Committee on the Fine Arts beg leave to report, that few changes of importance have occurred in their department since their last annual communication.

It became necessary in May last to make a new arrangement of the pictures, in order to accommodate some additional specimens of the Jarves

Collection, which had not been previously exhibited by us. All the modern works were therefore placed in the main gallery, and the Jarves pictures, numbering now 131 in all, were hung in the two small inner galleries. The Committee hope that this exhibition of the entire Collection will awaken sufficient interest among the members to secure its purchase, and that it may become the permanent property of the Society. Although many of the subjects are of slight interest to modern spectators, and some of them are treated in a hard and dry manner, they are nevertheless of great value as illustrations of the history of the Art, and are therefore peculiarly appropriate for the Museum of an institution like our own.

The following are the principal donations which have been made to this department during the past year:—

A portrait of Peter Remsen, Esq., from Mrs. E. A. Newton, of Pittsfield, Mass.

A portrait of Clarkson Crolius, Esq., by Ezra Ames, from Clarkson Crolius, Jr., Esq.

A portrait of the Hon. John Watts, from Gen. J. Watts De Peyster, of Tivoli.

Portraits of Rip Van Dam and his Wife, from Mrs. Emily Verplanck Goodwin, of Brooklyn.

Three pictures, being the legacy of the late Commodore Levy.

A drawing in water-colors of Bradford's Tombstone in Trinity Churchyard, by Abraham Hosier.

A bust of the Hon. John Watts, after Ball Hughes, from Gen. De Peyster.

And several valuable photographs.

In addition to the above, the Committee take particular pleasure in mentioning the most important gift which the Society has received during the year—the collection of original drawings for Audubon's great work, the Birds of America. This series, consisting of about 500 paintings, are valuable not only for their associations, but their high artistic character. They were purchased by a number of liberal and public-spirited gentlemen, members of the Society, who united in a subscription of four thousand dollars for the purpose.

The following objects of interest have been deposited in the Gallery:—

Eight pictures by Dr. Mayo.

Six pictures by Peter Richards, Jr., Esq., consisting of—

The Country Home, by Church.
A St. John, and
A portrait of Gen. Swift, by Huntington.
A work by Verbryck.
A Magdalen, and
A Madonna.

And the Dies of the Medals struck by the American Art Union, by Col. Andrew Warner.

Before closing their Report, the Committee desire to say a word upon the relations between the subject which they have to some extent in charge, and the great War in which the Nation is engaged. So far, the Arts of Design have very inadequately expressed the heroism, the patriotic devotion, the noble charities of the North, or what, alas! must, in numberless cases, perish from the remembrance of men without any record, the unimaginable sufferings and the glorious martyrdoms of the loyalists of the South. The pencil and the chisel have done infinitely less than the pen in perpetuating all these things. Indeed, no war which was ever waged has been so thoroughly described in a literary way as will be this gigantic struggle. No war ever enrolled among its soldiers so many men who are skilled in the art of composition. The vast numbers of private letters, diaries, communications to newspapers, official reports, pamphlets, apologies of this or that general, besides the more ponderous and formal histories, will make the literature of this revolution more copious and affluent than that of any war that was ever waged. A distinguished gentleman of a neighboring State has already completed between thirty and forty thick folio volumes, entirely filled with clippings from newspapers alone, and many other persons are making similar collections.

But the pictorial method of preserving memorials of this war has been either neglected or abused. It is true that the illustrated newspapers are full of sketches purporting to be pictures of important scenes, but the testimony of parties engaged shows that these representations, when they are not taken from photographs, are not always reliable. The desire of producing striking effects sometimes overcomes all other considerations, and the truth is now and then sacrificed to the demand of dramatic action or a pleasing play of light and shadow. Many of these designs are of little value excepting as studies of costume, and some of them are positively lying and fabulous. If all the terrific hand-to-hand encounters which we have seen for two or three years displayed in the pages of our

popular weeklies, had actually occurred, the combatants on each side would long ago have mutually annihilated each other, like the famous cats of Irish history.

The photographers have made so far the most important additions to the pictorial history of the war. They have prosecuted their undertaking under circumstances of great difficulty and even danger, running the risk of having their dark chambers converted into ambulances, or destroyed by hostile shells. But the caution and deliberation required for successful views of this sort are obviously impracticable in the confusion of a battle, and therefore it is not surprising that what we have hitherto obtained in this way has been little besides a representation of that awful "still life" which the plain shows after the conflict is over.

We hope that more attention will be paid by the higher artists to subjects of this sort in future. It is well known that Horace Vernet, who has given the most valuable pictures of the French campaigns in Algiers and elsewhere, made personal studies of the scenes he painted. We are glad to hear that one of our own distinguished painters has the intention to illustrate the famous battle of Chattanooga, by visiting the spot and seeing with his own eyes the remarkable natural features of the scenery which made that conflict not only one of the boldest but also the most pictorial in the history of war.

But so far, as we have already said, little has been done in this way. With the exception of Leutze's clever portrait of Burnside, a few excellent groups in plaster by Rodgers, and two or three spirited drawings by Darley and Eastman Johnston, scarcely anything has been produced of an enduring character illustrating the war.

But whatever may be the failure of this extraordinary struggle to inspire our artists with the desire to record its history, it is a curious fact that, notwithstanding it exhausts such immense amounts of treasure, and causes such wide-spread anxiety and sorrow, it has not apparently diminished the prosperity of the Arts of Design. On the contrary, they have never been more flourishing than during the three years last past. This is shown by the facility with which the chief institution established for their benefit—the National Academy—has raised a fund amounting to nearly one hundred and ten thousand dollars, and commenced the erection of a spacious and beautiful edifice, to contain its schools, museums, and exhibitions. Picture galleries are thronged with spectators, and valuable works of Art find purchasers at more liberal prices than were ever paid before in this country for such commodities. Striking proofs of this are the disposal of a book of Sketches, chiefly by New York artists, at a

fair in a neighboring city, for four thousand dollars, and the sale of a private collection within a few weeks in New York for more than one hundred thousand dollars!

In Washington, where the attention of the public and the authorities is more than in any other place at the North engrossed in the war, the grand plan for the extension of the Capitol advances steadily toward its completion. The bronze gates designed by Rodgers, and embodying in a series of bas-reliefs the history of Columbus, have been hung in their places, and the colossal America, modelled by Crawford and cast in metal by Mills, has been successfully raised to the summit of the dome.

It is a striking spectacle to see a great nation thus quietly adorning herself with the jewels of Art amidst the very smoke of the combat, serenely confident in her power to defend them from the profaning touch of the traitors who are seeking her life, and to show them to her children afterward, when the conflict shall be over, with all their splendors bright and untarnished.

All which is respectfully submitted.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS.

The Special Committee on whom it was devolved to nominate officers of the Society for the coming year, report as follows:—

Their first choice, and they doubt not that of the Society, as the successor of our late lamented President, was the officer who has so long occupied the chair of First Vice-President. Endeared to our own members, and to the community at large, by his dignity of character, his personal worth, his uniform courtesy and kindness, and by his well-known erudition, the Committee could look nowhere else while he permitted them the use of his name.

Dr. De Witt, however, had, previously to its meeting, signified decisively his intention of retiring from the active service of the Society, at the same time warmly expressing his continued interest in its welfare, and his sense of what he alone considers to be an honor conferred upon him in the appointment to his present office. Under these circumstances, the Committee felt that they had no right to urge upon him the acceptance of the Presidency, but solicited him still to lend the influence of his name and the weight of his advice to the Society, in the position he now holds; and they are gratified in being able to announce that he has consented to do so.

To fill the office of President, thus twice vacant, the Committee have unanimously fixed upon Mr. De Peyster, now Second Vice-President. During the forty years which that gentleman has been a member of the Society, he has been, as is well known, its constant and ardent friend, and one of its most liberal benefactors. Besides valuable donations of his own, he has given his aid effectually on more than one occasion, when the very existence of the Society was at stake, nor has it been wanting in securing the acquisition of the most brilliant of its collections. In thus referring to these facts, the Committee do not intend to exclude other qualifications, but they are of opinion that long and good service also should be weighed in the scale of preferment.

In the list of those who have occupied that chair, some of the brightest and best names of our State and country have been enrolled. They are, Egbert Benson, Gouverneur Morris, De Witt Clinton, David Hosack, James Kent, Morgan Lewis, Peter Gerard Stuyvesant, Peter Augustus Jay, Albert Gallatin, and Luther Bradish. What phase in our history, what great public service, what component of our nationality, do not those names embody and represent?

As Second Vice-President, the Committee offer the name of Mr. Benjamin Robert Winthrop, also an old member, and always a faithful and earnest worker; and in nominating him, it is not out of place to recal that one of the same name and lineage is now President of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and that from his pen the latest, and one of the most graceful American biographies has emanated—the life of John Winthrop, the great leader of the New England Puritans, and perhaps the brightest connecting link between the Old England and the New.

To the remaining offices the Committee recommend the re-appointment of the present holders, believing that none can be found more zealous and conscientious in the discharge of their duties. The Hon. George Bancroft, Foreign Corresponding Secretary, who had desired to be relieved from duty, has, at the earnest request of the Committee, consented to retain his position, at least for the present, notwithstanding the pressure of his own engagements.

The names recommended to the Society for the various offices are therefore as follows:—

For President, ...	Frederic De Peyster.
" First Vice-President, . .	Thomas De Witt, D.D.
" Second Vice-President, . .	Benjamin Robert Winthrop.
" Foreign Corresponding Secretary,	George Bancroft, LL.D.
" Domestic Corresponding Secretary,	Samuel Osgood, D.D.
" Recording Secretary, . .	Andrew Warner.
" Treasurer, ...	Benjamin H. Field.
" Librarian, ...	George H. Moore.

In these selections the Committee have consulted what they believed to be not only the wishes but the interests of the Society.

All which is respectfully submitted.

(Signed) George Gibbs,
Charles P. Kirkland,
William B. Taylor,
John B. Moreau,
Henry T. Drowne.

Hall of the Society, January, 1864.

FORM OF A BEQUEST.

I GIVE *and bequeathe to* "THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY," *founded in the year* 1804 *and incorporated by the Legislature of New-York in the year* 1809, *the sum of* _____ *dollars.*

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